DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 236 758 EA 015 947

AUTHOR Alexander, Lamar
TITLE We Need This Master Teacher Program. The Endpaper.
PUB DATE Sep 83
NOTE 2p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Executive Educator; v5 n9 p48 Sep 1983

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Apprenticeships; Beginning Teachers; *Incentives; *Master Teachers; Program Descriptions; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Promotion
IDENTIFIERS *Master Teacher Program; PF Project

ABSTRACT

The governor of Tennessee has proposed a Better Schools Program designed to improve the state's school system, attract more and better-paying jobs to the state, and help retain the best teachers. The Master Teacher component of the program, if adopted, will set up four certificated career stages for teachers: (1) apprentice; (2) professional; (3) senior; and (4) master. The last three stages will provide salary awards for teachers who meet certain experience and performance criteria and who receive the recommendation of the Master Teacher Certification Commission. This Commission is the key to success for the Master Teacher Program. To be a legitimate evaluation authority, it must be made up of qualified people who judge teachers according to objective standards. The state legislature - even though it hasn't yet passed the Better Schools bill - has authorized the establishment of an Interim Commission to develop teacher evaluation criteria. The Interim Commission is also selecting the state's first 75 Master Teachers who will be called on to implement the evaluation system at the regional and local levels. A financial incentive will help make teaching a fully professional career, draw the best young people, retain and challenge them to do even better, and inspire excellence in the classroom by rewarding excellence in teachers. (JW)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Gregg W. Downey
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED236758

EA015947

## The Endpaper

by
Lamar Alexander

# We need this master teacher program

IN TENNESSEE, no teacher currently gets paid a cent more for doing a good job. The same is true in all other statewide public school systems. Incentive programs typically base salary increases on training and experience, but they do not reward excellence. And that's a situation we're working to remedy.

You've probably heard of Tennessee's proposed Better Schools Program—a ten-point plan designed to improve our state's school system, attract more and better-paying jobs to our state, and help us keep the best possible teachers for our young people. The Master Teacher component of the program—which has been debated hotly by educators across the state and has received nationwide press coverage—is based on a very simple notion: If you do a better job, you get paid more.

Since I proposed the program to the Tennessee legislature in January, it has been endorsed by just about everyone. The only organized opposition comes from the one group most people would expect to be leading the charge for it—the Tennessee Education Association (T.E.A.)—an affiliate of the National Education Association. The legislature voted in April to defer action on it until next session, after further study of the proposal as well as of a second bill introduced by T.E.A. Although I'm disappointed by the decision, I believe it will give us time to meet with teachers and help them understand the Better Schools Program and, especially, the Master Teacher Program.

*Lamar Alexander is governor of Tennessee.*

Here's how the Master Teacher Program will work, if adopted: The program sets up four career stages for teachers—Apprentice Teacher, Professional Teacher, Senior Teacher, and Master Teacher. The last three stages all carry salary awards for teachers who make the grade. To step from one stage to the next, a teacher must meet certain experience and performance criteria and receive the recommendation of the Master Teacher Certification Commission (more about the commission in a moment). The state board of education then will issue the certificates.

Basic requirements for certification at each stage—and pay increases that go with certification—are as follows:

• *Apprentice Teacher certificate.* This is a three-year, nonrenewable certificate. Criteria are similar to those currently used for a new teacher: a degree from an approved teacher-education program or equivalent courses, experience as a student teacher, and successful completion of the National Teachers Examination. The three-year apprenticeship period is designed to give new teachers extensive on-the-job experience in the classroom. During this period, teachers remain under close supervision, regularly being observed, evaluated, and counseled by experienced Senior and Master teachers, the school principal, and other supervisors. An Apprentice Teacher must qualify to become a Professional Teacher within three years or must seek another career.

• *Professional Teacher certificate.* Requirements for this five-year, renewable certificate are three years' teaching experience and the recommendation of the Master Teacher Certification Commission for meeting certain performance standards. Qualifying as a Professional Teacher brings a $1,000 increase in annual salary, paid for by the state.

• *Senior Teacher certificate.* After at least three years as a Professional Teacher, a teacher may apply for a five-year, renewable Senior Teacher certificate. Once again, teachers must be recommended by the certification commission for meeting performance criteria. A Senior Teacher receives a $2,000 annual salary increase for a regular, ten-month teaching contract. In addition, a Senior Teacher is entitled to a $4,000 annual supplement for accepting an 11-month contract. (The state will pay these supplements for up to 25 percent of the teachers in each school system.)

• *Master Teacher certificate.* After at least five years as a Senior Teacher, a teacher may apply for a five-year, renewable Master Teacher certificate—once again, issued by the state board of education upon recommendation of the certification commission. A Master Teacher receives a $3,000 annual pay supplement for the ten-month teaching contract and is entitled to $5,000 a year in extra pay for an 11-month contract or $7,000 for a 12-month contract.

The key to success for the Master Teacher Program is the Master Teacher Certification Commission. To be a legitimate evaluation authority, it must be made up of qualified people who judge teachers according to objective standards. To make this possible, the legislature—even though it hasn't yet passed the Better Schools bill—has authorized the establishment of an Interim Commission. Made up of education leaders from across the state, the Interim Commission is working to develop the criteria by which it will evaluate teachers. It also is selecting the state's first 75 Master Teachers, who will be called on to implement the evaluation system at the regional and local levels.

By the time it goes into operation, the program will offer $116 million annually in pay supplements for an estimated 87 percent of Tennessee's 46,500 public school teachers. For the first time, we will be able to pay our better teachers more money for doing a top-quality job. That kind of incentive will help make teaching a fully professional career, draw our best young people into it, keep our best teachers in it, challenge our best teachers to do even better—and inspire excellence in our classrooms by rewarding excellence in our teachers.

When this program passes, Tennessee, for once, will be first in public education—first to set important precedents for other states to study and follow. ■

Reprinted, with permission, from The Executive Educator, September. THE EXECUTIVE EDUCATOR
Copyright 1983, The Executive Educator. All rights reserved. v5 n9 p48